DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 323 987 IR 014 632

AUTHOR Page, Marilyn
TITLE Active Learning in Secondary Schools: Educational Media and Technology.
PUB DATE Nov 89
NOTE 5p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Audiovisual Aids; Class Activities; Computer Software; Educational Technology; Instructional Effectiveness; *Learning Activities; Learning Strategies; Secondary Education; Social Studies; *Student Developed Materials; *Student Motivation; *Student Participation; Student Projects; Student Research

ABSTRACT

The incorporation of media and technology into the classroom does not ensure the enhancement of student learning. Research has shown that students learn more through active participation in their own learning process. From 1984 to 1987, a teacher's secondary social studies students were actively involved in the National History Day Program (NHDP), one purpose of which is to promote student competency and interest in carrying out original research. Of the four program categories--paper, project, performance, and media--the media category was the most popular. Students worked in groups of from two to five to produce videos, dissolve slide/tape shows, standard slide presentation, computer programs, and overhead projection displays on designated themes. Compared to academically similar students in previous classes using alternative instructional methods, the NHDP students showed dramatic increases in involvement, learning, comprehension, and motivation. They learned how to find, interpret, analyze, organize, use, and present information in creative ways, and they learned skills related to everyday technologies. Participation in NHDP classes became popular with students in the school, more of whom tried to enroll each year although the work involved was extraordinary and relentless. In addition to active participation, cooperative group work, intergroup competition, and student choice of project may have contributed to the overwhelming success of the program. (DB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

IR

ED323987

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Active Learning in Secondary Schools:

Educational Media and Technology

Marilyn Page

University of Massachusetts

11/1989

IR014632

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Marilyn Page

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

While schools have attempted to incorporate media and technology into the curriculum by buying equipment and software, classrooms of the 80's do not reflect the technological developments of the decade. Many studies (Becker, 1985; Schug, 1988; Ehman & Glenn, 1987) and simple observations show that staff rarely or never use, or rarely use or integrate appropriately, the equipment or programs. Teachers who have used educational media probably have experienced what I have - that most filmstrips, slide presentations, films, videos, instructional TV programs and even computer programs put students (and teachers) to sleep.

My assertion is that teachers use educational media and technology in ineffective ways. Students need to be actively involved in their own learning, and as long as they are passive receivers, as with the 'sit and watch' or with the 'sit, input, watch, then sit, input and watch some more' use of educational media, they will suffer terminal (sorry, no pun intended) boredom and will learn little. Pratton and Hales (1986) define active participation as a "teacher's deliberate attempt to cause students to participate overtly in a lesson." Using a randomized, posttest, comparative study of fifth graders, Pratton and Hales studied the effects of active participation on student learning and concluded that it is an efficient teaching method and that it enhances student learning.

If students can learn more through active participation, what does this say about the possible use of educational media in the classroom? While Pratton and Hales would consider writing answers and raising fingers in response to questions as active participation, my definition is much broader and more 'active.' From 1984-1987, my secondary social studies students were involved in the National History Day Program (NHDP), one purpose of which is to promote student competency and interest in carrying out original

research. Of the four program categories - paper, project, performance and media - the media category was the most popular. Students, who worked in groups of from two to five, produced videos, dissolve slide/tape shows, standard slide presentations, computer programs and overhead projection displays on the designated theme. That was and is active participation.

The student experiences in the NHDP support the findings that in addition to enhancing student learning, active participation also forces teacher and students to spend more time on task (Pratton & Hales, 1986). Compared to academically similar students in previous classes using alternative instructional methods, the NHDP students showed dramatic increase in involvement, learning, comprehension and motivation. The students learned how to find, interpret, analyze, organize, use and present information in creative ways; they learned skills related to everyday technologies; and, in fact, they created their own visual curriculum. Seniors began to print in their yearbook that the most memorable part of their high school years was participation in the NHDP, and each year more students tried to enroll in the NHDP classes even though the work involved was extraordinary and relentless.

As with the successful lessons of the Pratton and Hales study, active participation was only one component in the NHDP. How influential in the success of the NHDP students were cooperative group work, intergroup competition, and student choice of project? Or, in fact, were and are these components part of the definition of 'active' participation?

Bibliography

Becker, H.J. (1985). How schools use microcomputers: Results from a national survey. In M.Chen & W. Paisley (Eds.). Children and micro-computers: Research on the newest medium. California: Sage

Ehman, L.H. & Glenn, A.D. (1987). Computer-based education in social studies. Bloomington, Ind: ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/ Social Science Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No.

Pratton, J. & Hales, L.W. (1986). The effects of active participation on student learning. Journal of Educational Research, 79(4), 210-215.

Schug, M.D. (1988). What do social studies teachers say about using computers? The Social Studies, May/June, 112-115.

END

U.S. Dept. of Education

Office of Education
Research and
Improvement (OERI)

ERIC

Date Filmed

March 21,1991